



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS
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FOUNDER
Mrs. Sybil Brand

CHAIRPERSON
Mrs. Eleanor R. Montañó

VICE CHAIRPERSON
Mr. Frank S. Bacio

Ms. Barbara Bigby
Mr. Vito Cannella
Ms. Rita Hall
Mr. John A. Hammargren
Mr. Carl E. Moore

MINUTES OF THE **SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS** **MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING** **OCTOBER 15, 2008**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Montañó called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Chair Montañó led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

ATTENDANCE

Present

Chair Eleanor R. Montañó
Frank Bacio
Barbara Bigby
Rita Hall
Carl E. Moore

Excused Absence

Vito Cannella
John A. Hammargren

Others Present

Captain Warren Asmus, Sheriff's Department
Michael Varela, Probation Department
Barbara Butler, Department of Children and Family Services
Dorothy Channel, Department of Children and Family Services
Carla Carr, Department of Auditor-Controller
Cesar Menchaca, Internal Services Department
Allen P. Henry, Community Care Licensing

Staff

Sandra Barbee, Chief, Commission Services
Janice Davis, Commission Services Staff
Garen Khachian, Commission Services Staff

Commissioner Moore joined the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Chair Montaña welcomed everyone in attendance and requested that Department Representatives introduce themselves.

Sheriff's Department:

Captain Asmus reported the following:

- The "Custody Assistance Pilot Program" in Court Services has been successful. The Custody Assistance personnel handle the paperwork of the inmates.
- Department 95 is the first temporary staging area to solve the issue of overcrowding and special handling of inmates.

Commissioners Bigby joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Department of Children and Family Services:

Ms. Dorothy Channel gave the following report and then reported on two newspaper articles:

- The reported number of physical abuse allegations was 8.
- The reported number of sexual abuse allegations was 5.
- The reported number of general neglect allegations was 4.
- The reported number of runaways from group homes was 154.
- There have been no group home closures since the September 17, 2008, Sybil Brand Commission meeting.
- Every year in May a number of individuals and organizations are honored for their contributions to Los Angeles County foster youth during the "Los Angeles County Foster Care Awareness Campaign" by the Board of Supervisors.
- "Wednesday's Child", broadcasted by KTTV FOX 11 News every Wednesday and Sunday night at 10:00 p.m., regarding children in group homes and their success stories. The social workers from DCFS are encouraged to watch the program.
- "Former Foster Kid Turns Her Life Around", Sacramento Bee, October 2, 2008, regarding Deborah Duke, one of 12 children born to a drug-addicted mother and raised in a dozen foster homes. She overcame those obstacles to graduate with a perfect 4.0 grade-point average from Heald College in Roseville.
- "Fostering Warm Feelings", Daily Breeze, October 4, 2008, regarding children in the county's foster care system that will no longer meet in an office or fast food restaurant to see their biological parents during monitored visits; they will begin using Torrance Church.

Department of Auditor-Controller:

Ms. Carla Carr gave the following report:

- An Audit of the Moore's Cottage Group Home in Pomona and Altadena, revealed violations of an employee who's Department of Justice records were not on file.
- The Moore's Cottage Group Home Audit in Pomona revealed damages to the living room furniture; bathrooms were not clean; bed pillows were worn; interior wall and back porch needs painting; and ceiling fans need to be securely attached to the ceiling.
- The Moore's Cottage Group Home Audit in Altadena revealed bed pillows and mattresses are worn; dressers are broken; and bedroom and bathroom walls are damaged.
- The Fred Jefferson Group Home Audit, revealed facility and environmental improvements are needed; Needs and Services Plans not comprehensive; and all children are not provided with Life Books.

Probation Department:

Mr. Michael Varela reported the following:

- Camp Holton had to be evacuated due to the wild fires. Camp Miller and Malibu Camps may need to be evacuated.
- Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall was evacuated due to a power failure.
- A report on "Peace Officer Vacancies" in the Probation Department was distributed.

Department of Mental Health: No representative was present.

Internal Services Department:

Mr. Cesar Menchaca introduced himself and informed the Commission he is representing Mr. Michael Henderson.

Community Care Licensing Division:

Mr. Allen P. Henry reported the following:

- Community Care Licensing contacted all group homes/foster care under its jurisdiction to assure children at the homes were safe due to the fires.

Chair Montaña and the Commissioners thanked the various Department Representatives for their participation and reports.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 8, 2008, MEETING MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Hall, seconded by Commissioner Bigby, and unanimously carried, the minutes of October 8, 2008, were approved with no changes.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Montaña reported on four (4) news articles:

- "Homeless But Not Alone", Los Angeles Times, October 13, 2008, regarding John Robert McGraham, the man who was torched to death in Mid-Wilshire, had a sibling and a community that adopted him.
- "Homeless And Burned To Death", Daily Breeze, October 13, 2008, regarding John Robert McGraham, the man who was torched to death in the Mid-Wilshire area. Plans to create a task force to stop the violence and find housing for people who live in the streets are being investigated.
- "New Law Born To Foster Kids", Daily Breeze, October 14, 2008, regarding a bipartisan bill improving the nation's child-welfare system.
- "County Ok's \$62 Million To Treat Children In Foster Care", Los Angeles Times, October 15, 2008, regarding a step toward settling a suit on behalf of youths with psychiatric or behavioral problems.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Bacio reported that the current balance of the Commission's Charitable Fund is \$1,092.83.

APPROVAL OF SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION QUARTERLY REPORT

On motion of Commissioner Hall, seconded by Vice Chair Bacio, and unanimously carried, the Sybil Brand Commission Quarterly Report for July – September 2008 was approved with no changes.

CORRESPONDENCE/AUDIT REPORT

There were none.

FACILITY/GROUP HOME INSPECTION REPORTS FROM OCTOBER 8, 2008 TO OCTOBER 15, 2008

Boys Republic (Pomona) – 5, #1 – Commissioners Hammargren

The facility was visited on October 2, 2008, and no one was home.

Children Are Our Future (West Hills) – 8, #1 – Commissioner Montaña

The facility was visited on October 9, 2008, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Area of Concerns: First aid kits need to be restocked; fire extinguishers need to be serviced.

GLASS (Norris Rocaberte) – 24, #4 – Commissioners Hall and Moore

The facility was visited on October 9, 2008, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Rosemary Children School – Commissioner Bigby

The facility was visited on October 13, 2008, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Fleming & Barne Dimondale Adolescent #1 – 21, #2 – Commissioner Montaña

The facility was visited on October 13, 2008, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Greene Home For Boys (Sultan) – 25, #5 – Commissioner Montaña

The facility was visited on October 14, 2008, and the home is closed.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Staff was asked to send a letter to Chief Probation Officer Robert Taylor commending Michael Varela for his cooperation and assistance to the Commission.
- Commissioner Bigby invited the Commission to join the Altadena Branch of the NAACP In Saluting the Pasadena Unified School District's "Stars of Education" Luncheon, Sunday, November 16, 2008 at the Castaway Restaurant in Burbank.

MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA (To be presented and placed on a future agenda)

Holiday Celebration

Operation Graduation

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Montaña adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m. in memory of Robert McGraham, homeless victim, and the two fatalities related to the wild fires in California.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Davis
Commission Services Division